

Message Text

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16

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-14 ISO-00 EB-11 OPIC-12

AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 CIEP-03 COME-00 DODE-00

FPC-01 H-03 INR-11 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01

PM-07 RSC-01 SAM-01 SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00

FRB-03 FEA-02 DRC-01 /226 W
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R 272220Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2638

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 6413

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENGR, PFOR, PGOV, EC, US

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS DIM FOR REPLACEMENT OF JARRIN AS NATURAL RESOURCES

MINISTER

REF: QUITO 6329 (NOTAL)

1. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF SILENCE, ECUADOR'S PRESS HAS AGAIN
PICKED UP THESE OF POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT OF NAVY CAPT. GUSTAVO
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JARRIN AS MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES. LEADING GUAYAQUIL

DAILY UNIVERSO IN A SEEMINGLY WELL-SOURCED LEAD ARTICLE DECLARES THAT JARRIN HAS BEEN "RATIFIED" IN HIS POST. CITING "OFFICIAL SOURCES" IN QUITO, ARTICLE STATES THAT ACTION HAS BEEN DECIDED UPON BY PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ "AS AN ACT OF RECOGNITION OF (JARRIN'S) RECENT PERFORMANCE IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES... AND IN RECOGNITION OF THE HONOR CONFERRED ON HIM BY OPEC, AS ITS PRESIDENT, SINCE THIS HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AN HONOR FOR ECUADOR AND AN EXPRESSION OF RECOGNITION OF THE PETROLEUM POLICY FOLLOWED BY OUR COUNTRY".

2. ARTICLE REHASHES PREVIOUS RUMORS OF JARRIN'S REPLACEMENT AND NOTES, SYMPATHETICALLY, "BACKGROUND OF UNCERTAINTY" IN WHICH JARRIN LEFT FOR VIENNA. IT ALSO NOTES "IMPACT" OF HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF OPEC XLI SESSION, WHICH "CONSTITUTED AN INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF HIS PERFORMANCE" BY THE OTHER PETROLEUM-PRODUCING STATES. ARTICLE GOES ON TO CITE PALACE SPOKESMAN AGUIRRE'S PRIOR STATEMENT THAT, IN THE OPINION OF PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ, JARRIN'S DESIGNATION BY OPEC CONSTITUTED "RECOGNITION OF THE VIGOROUS POLICY" OF ECUADOR IN PETROLEUM MATTERS. ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH A NAUSEA-PROVOKING EULOGY OF JARRIN'S TWO AND HALF YEARS STEWARDSHIP OF ECUADOR'S PETROLEUM POLICY.

3. THE WHOLE TENOR OF THIS BACKGROUNDER SUGGESTS THAT ITS SOURCES RESIDE IN THE MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES. IT LOOKS LIKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT BY JARRIN TO PORTRAY HIMSELF AS THE INDISPENSABLE HERO OF ECUADOR'S STRUGGLE TO DEFEND ITS PETROLEUM BIRTHRIGHT. AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED (REFTEL) JARRIN MAY HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED THIS OBJECTIVE BY MAKING HIS REPLACEMENT POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, IN SPITE OF PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ'S LONG-REPORTED DISTASTE FOR JARRIN'S INDEPENDENCE AND RADICAL APPROACH TO POLICY ISSUES.

4. THAT THE QUESTION MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY CLOSED IS SUGGESTED BY PALACE SPOKESMAN AGUIRRE'S STATEMENT, ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTED FROM GUAYAQUIL, THAT "THE POSSIBILITY (JARRIN) WILL BE REPLACED HAS NOT BEEN DISCARDED, AND NEITHER HAS HE BEEN RATIFIED" -- THUS GIVING THE LIE TO UNIVERSO'S FLAT STATEMENT (PARA ONE) TO THE CONTRARY. AGUIRRE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THE "SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES", MADE UP OF THE SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THREE SERVICES PLUS THE DEFENSE MINISTER, IS CURRENTLY IN SESSION (WHICH IS TRUE) TO DECIDE ON

PROMOTIONS TO FLAG AND GENERAL OFFICER GRADE FOR THOSE, LIKE JARRIN, WHO ARE "IN THE ZONE". THE PRESIDENT, AGUIRRE SAID, WILL MAKE HIS DECISION IN DUE COURSE BASED ON THE COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

5. THIS IS, OF COURSE, PRETTY VAGUE AND THE COUNCIL'S "RECOMMENDATIONS" MAY BE USED BY RODRIGUEZ AS A FACE-SAVING DEVICE TO JUSTIFY HIS RETENTION OF JARRIN. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT BEYOND POSSIBILITY THAT JARRIN - WHOM WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY HEARD WOULD NOT BE PROMOTED --MIGHT BE OFFERED HIS BROAD STRIPE IN EXCHANGE FOR "GOING QUIETLY". IN ANY CASE, JARRIN HIMSELF HAS BEEN DISCREETLY KEEPING HIS HEAD DOWN IN CONTACTS WITH THE PRESS. HE DISMISSED THE UNIVERSO REPORT AS MERE "PRESS COMMENTARY", RECALLED THAT HE IS AN OFFICER ON ACTIVE DUTY AND SUBJECT TO HIS MILITARY SUPERIORS, AND REFERRED QUESTIONERS TO THE PALACE FOR FURTHER NEWS.
BREWSTER

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